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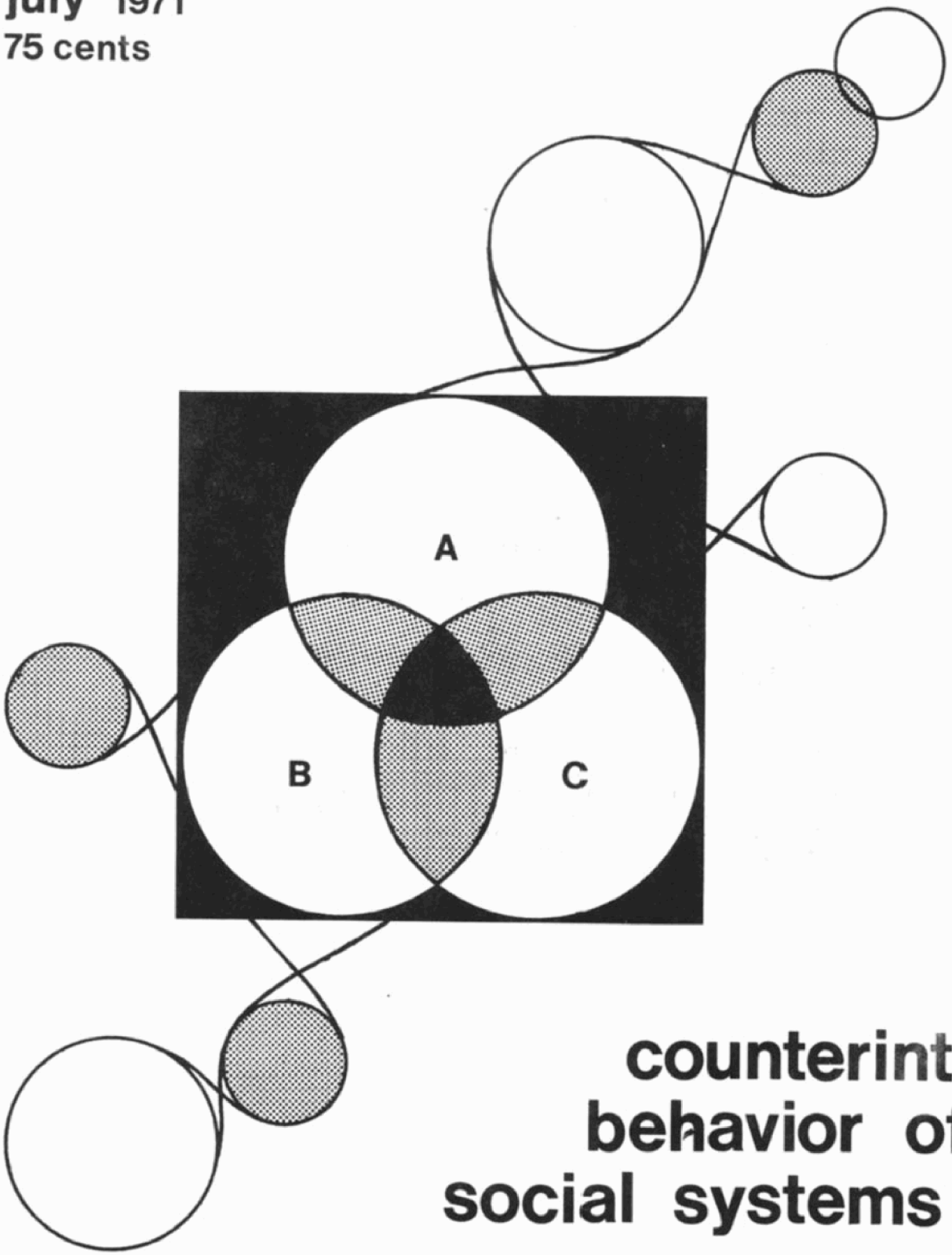

counterintuitive behavior of social systems

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TO OUR READERS . . .

With a view toward fostering understanding of significant topics, *REASON* presents, from time to time, articles which deal either critically or inquisitively with the views of the central figures of the libertarian movement.

It is not our aim to foster divisive haggling among advocates of liberty; the focus of *REASON* is and will always be on ideas, avoiding the publication of personal attacks and innuendoes.

This month, *REASON* publishes articles which discuss the views of two thinkers—Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard—who have been major contributors to aspects of the libertarian movement. The articles show that there are questions which have not been answered to the satisfaction of all of our authors and, presumably, readers. With a radical philosophy such areas of questioning and inconclusiveness are to be expected.

Those interested in exploring the ideas considered in this issue of *REASON* may want to consult—in addition to those publications cited in this issue—*THE OBJECTIVIST*, a monthly periodical edited by Ayn Rand and published at 135 East 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016; *THE LIBERTARIAN FORUM*, edited by Murray N. Rothbard and published at Box 341, Madison Square Station, New York, N.Y. 10010.

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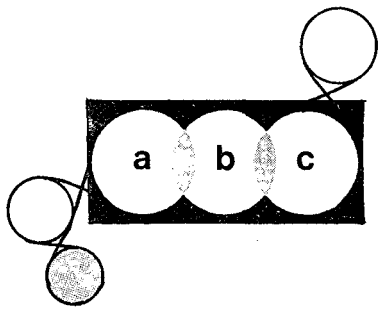
counterintuitive behavior of social systems



JAY W FORRESTER

This article represents a departure from REASON'S usual content, in that it is not based on explicitly libertarian values. It is, nonetheless, an extremely significant and thought-provoking piece of work. Jay Forrester is a professor at MIT's Sloan School of Management. As was pointed out in Lynn Kinsky's article in last month's REASON ("An Anthropological Perspective on Social Change"), the functional approach to describing social systems pioneered by Forrester represents a major advance in social science methodology. Instead of merely describing, in static terms, the functioning of a society, Forrester's methodology explores its functioning dynamically, over time.

Forrester's findings have attracted a great deal of attention and controversy. He has been denounced by antipoverty bureaucrats and professional urban planners because his studies indicate that most government solutions to urban problems have in fact made the problems worse. His findings on the relationships among population, pollution, and industrialization (some of which are presented here) will provoke additional controversy. We do not necessarily agree with all of Prof. Forrester's premises, but we think his analytical methodology holds great promise for helping us to understand the complexities of socio-political systems.

This paper addresses several issues of broad concern in the United States: population trends; the quality of urban life; national policy for urban growth; and the unexpected, ineffective, or detrimental results often generated by government programs in these areas.

The nation exhibits a growing sense of futility as it repeatedly attacks deficiencies in our social system while the symptoms continue to worsen. Legislation is debated and passed with great promise and hope. But many programs prove to be ineffective. Results often seem unrelated to those expected when the programs were planned. At times programs cause exactly the reverse of desired results.

It is now possible to explain how such contrary results can happen. There are fundamental reasons why people misjudge the behavior of social systems. There are orderly processes at work in the creation of human judgment and intuition that frequently lead people to wrong decisions when faced with complex and highly interacting systems. Until we come to a much better understanding of social systems, we should expect that attempts to develop corrective programs will continue to disappoint us.

The purpose of this paper is to leave with its readers a sense of caution about continuing to depend on the same past approaches that have led to our present feeling of frustration and to suggest an approach which can eventually lead to a better understanding of our social systems and thereby to more effective policies for guiding the future.

A NEW APPROACH TO SOCIAL SYSTEMS

It is my basic theme that the human mind is not adapted to interpreting how social systems behave. Our social systems belong to the class called multi-loop nonlinear feedback systems. In the long history of evolution it has not been necessary for man to understand these systems until very recent historical times. Evolutionary processes have not given us the mental skill needed to properly interpret the dynamic behavior of the systems of which we have now become a part.

In addition, the social sciences have fallen into some mistaken "scientific" practices which compound man's natural shortcomings. Computers are often being used for what the computer does poorly and the human mind does well. At the same time the human mind is being used for what the human mind does poorly and the computer does well. Even worse, impossible tasks are attempted while achievable and important goals are ignored.

Until recently there has been no way to estimate the behavior of social systems except by contemplation, discussion, argument, and guesswork. To point a way out of our present dilemma about social systems, I will sketch an approach that combines the strength of the human mind and the strength of today's computers. The approach is an outgrowth of developments over the last 40 years, in which much of the research has been at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The concepts of feedback system behavior apply sweepingly from physical systems through social systems. The ideas were first developed and applied to engineering systems. They have now reached practical usefulness in major aspects of our social systems.

I am speaking of what has come to be called industrial dynamics. The name is a misnomer because the methods apply to complex systems regardless of the field in which they are located. A more appropriate name would be *system dynamics.* In our own work, applications have been made to corporate policy, to the dynamics of diabetes as a medical system, to the growth and stagnation of an urban area, and most recently to world dynamics representing the interactions of population,

pollution, industrialization, natural resources, and food. System dynamics, as an extension of the earlier design of physical systems, has been under development at M.I.T. since 1956. The approach is easy to understand but difficult to practice. Few people have a high level of skill; but preliminary work is developing all over the world. Some European countries and especially Japan have begun centers of education and research.

COMPUTER MODELS OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

People would never attempt to send a space ship to the moon without first testing the equipment by constructing prototype models and by computer simulation of the anticipated space trajectories. No company would put a new kind of household appliance or electronic computer into production without first making laboratory tests. Such models and laboratory tests do not guarantee against failure, but they do identify many weaknesses which can then be corrected before they cause full-scale disasters.

Our social systems are far more complex and harder to understand than our technological systems. Why, then, do we not use the same approach of making models of social systems and conducting laboratory experiments on those models before we try new laws and government programs in real life? The answer is often stated that our knowledge of social systems is insufficient for constructing useful models. But what justification can there be for the apparent assumption that we do not know enough to construct models but we do know enough to directly design new social systems by passing laws and starting new social programs? I am suggesting that we now do know enough to make useful models of social systems. Conversely, we do not know enough to design the most effective social systems directly without first going through a model-building experimental phase. But I am confident, and substantial supporting evidence is beginning to accumulate, that the proper use of models of social systems can lead to far better systems, laws, and programs.

It is now possible to construct in the laboratory realistic models of social systems. Such models are simplifications of the actual social system but can be far more comprehensive than the mental models that we otherwise use as the basis for debating governmental action.

Before going further, I should emphasize that there is nothing new in the use of models to represent social systems. Each of us uses models constantly. Every person in his private life and in his business life instinctively uses models for decision making. The mental image of the world you carry around in your head is a model. One does not have a city or a government or a country in his head. He has only selected concepts and relationships which he uses to represent the real system. A mental image is a model. All of our decisions are taken on the basis of models. All of our laws are passed on the basis of models. All executive actions are taken on the basis of models. The question is not to use or ignore models. The question is only a choice among alternative models.

The mental model is fuzzy. It is incomplete. It is imprecisely stated. Furthermore, within one individual, a mental model changes with time and even during the flow of a single conversation. The human mind assembles a few relationships to fit the context of a discussion. As the subject shifts so does the model. When only a single topic is being discussed, each participant in a conversation employs a different mental model to interpret the subject. Fundamental assumptions differ but are never brought into the open. Goals are different and are left unstated. It is little wonder that compromise takes so long. And it is not surprising that consensus leads to laws and programs that fail in their objectives or produce new difficulties greater than those that have been relieved.

For these reasons we stress the importance of being explicit about assumptions and interrelating them in a computer model. Any concept or assumption that can be clearly described in words can be incorporated in a computer model. When done, the ideas become clear. Assumptions are exposed so they may be discussed and debated.

But the most important difference between the properly conceived computer model and the mental model is in the ability to determine the dynamic consequences when the assumptions within the model interact with one another. The human mind is not adapted to sensing correctly the consequences of a mental model. The mental model may be correct in structure and assumptions but, even so, the human mind—either individually or as a group consensus—is most apt to draw

the wrong conclusions. There is no doubt about the digital computer routinely and accurately tracing through the sequences of actions that result from following the statements of behavior for individual points in the model system. This inability of the human mind to use its own mental models is clearly shown when a computer model is constructed to reproduce the assumptions held by a single person. In other words, the model is refined until it is fully agreeable in all its assumptions to the perceptions and ideas of a single person. Then, it usually happens that the system that has been described does not act the way the person anticipated. Usually there is an internal contradiction in mental models between the assumed structure and the assumed future consequences. Ordinarily the assumptions about structure and internal motivations are more nearly correct than are the assumptions about the implied behavior.

The kind of computer models that I am discussing are strikingly similar to mental models. They are derived from the same sources. They may be discussed in the same terms. But computer models differ from mental models in important ways. The computer models are stated explicitly. The "mathematical" notation that is used for describing the model is unambiguous. It is a language that is clearer, simpler, and more precise than such spoken languages as English or French. Its advantage is in the clarity of meaning and the simplicity of the language syntax. The language of a computer model can be understood by almost anyone, regardless of education background. Furthermore, any concept and relationship that can be clearly stated in ordinary language can be translated into computer model language.

There are many approaches to computer models. Some are naive. Some are conceptually and structurally inconsistent with the nature of actual systems. Some are based on methodologies for obtaining input data that commit the models to omitting major concepts and relationships in the psychological and human reaction areas that we all know to be crucial. With so much activity in computer models and with the same terminology having different meanings in the different approaches, the situation must be confusing to the casual observer. The key to success is not in having a computer; the important thing is how the computer is used. With respect to models, the key is not to computerize a model, but instead to have a model structure and relationships which properly represent the system that is being considered.

I am speaking here of a kind of computer model that is very different from the models that are now most common in the social sciences. Such a computer model is not derived statistically from time-series data. Instead, the kind of computer model I am discussing is a statement of system structure. It contains the assumptions being made about the system. The model is only as good as the expertise which lies behind its formulation. Great and correct theories in physics or in economics are few and far between. A great computer model is distinguished from a poor one by the degree to which it captures more of the essence of the social system that it presumes to represent. Many mathematical models are limited because they are formulated by techniques and according to a conceptual structure that will not accept the multiple-feedback-loop and nonlinear nature of real systems. Other models are defective because of lack of knowledge or deficiencies of perception on the part of the persons who have formulated them.

But a recently developed kind of computer modeling is now beginning to show the characteristics of behavior of actual systems. These models explain why we are having the present difficulties with our actual social systems and furthermore explain why so many efforts to improve social systems have failed. In spite of their shortcomings, models can now be constructed that are far superior to the intuitive models in our heads on which we are now basing national social programs.

This approach to the dynamics of social systems differs in two important ways from common practice in social sciences and government. There seems to be a common attitude that the major difficulty is shortage of information and data. Once data is collected, people then feel confident in interpreting the implications. I differ on both of these attitudes. The problem is not shortage of data but rather our inability to perceive the consequences of the information we already possess. The system dynamics approach starts with the concepts and information on which people are already acting. Generally these are sufficient. The available perceptions are then assembled in a computer model which can show the consequences of the well-known and properly perceived parts of the system. Generally, the consequences are unexpected.

COUNTERINTUITIVE NATURE OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Our first insights into complex social systems came from our corporate work. Time after time we have gone into a corporation which is having severe and well-known difficulties. The difficulties can be major and obvious such as a falling market share, low profitability, or instability of employment. Such difficulties are known throughout the company and by anyone outside who reads the management press. One can enter such a company and discuss with people in key decision points what they are doing to solve the problem. Generally speaking we find that people perceive correctly their immediate environment. They know what they are trying to accomplish. They know the crises which will force certain actions. They are sensitive to the power structure of the organization, to traditions, and to their own personal goals and welfare. In general, when circumstances are conducive to frank disclosure, people can state what they are doing and can give rational reasons for their actions. In a troubled company, people are usually trying in good conscience and to the best of their abilities to solve the major difficulties. Policies are being followed at the various points in the organization on the presumption that they will alleviate the difficulties. One can combine these policies into a computer model to show the consequences of how the policies interact with one another. In many instances it then emerges that the known policies describe a system which actually causes the troubles. In other words, the known and intended practices of the organization are fully sufficient to create the difficulty, regardless of what happens outside the company or in the marketplace. In fact,

a downward spiral develops in which the presumed solution makes the difficulty worse and thereby causes redoubling of the presumed solution.

The same downward spiral frequently develops in government. Judgment and debate lead to a program that appears to be sound. Commitment increases to the apparent solution. If the presumed solution actually makes matters worse, the process by which this happens is not evident. So, when the troubles increase, the efforts are intensified that are actually worsening the problem.

DYNAMICS OF URBAN SYSTEMS

Our first major excursion outside of corporate policy began in February, 1968, when John F. Collins, former mayor of Boston, became Professor of Urban Affairs at M.I.T. He and I discussed my work in industrial dynamics and his experience with urban difficulties. A close collaboration led to applying to the dynamics of the city the same methods that had been created for understanding the social and policy structure of the corporation. A model structure was developed to represent the fundamental urban processes. The proposed structure shows how industry, housing, and people interact with each other as a city grows and decays. The results are described in my book *URBAN DYNAMICS,* and some were summarized in *TECHNOLOGY REVIEW* (April 1969, pp. 21-31).

I had not previously been involved with urban behavior or urban policies. But the emerging story was strikingly similar to what we had seen in the corporation. Actions taken to alleviate the difficulties of a city can actually make matters worse. We examined four common programs for improving the depressed nature of the central city. One is the creation of jobs as by bussing the unemployed to the suburbs or through governmental jobs as employer of last resort. Second was a training program to increase the skills of the lowest-income group. Third was financial aid to the depressed city as by federal subsidy. Fourth was the construction of low-cost housing. All of these are shown to lie between neutral and detrimental almost irrespective of the criteria used for judgment. They range from ineffective to harmless judged either by their effect on the economic health of the city or by their long-range effect on the low-income population of the city.

The results both confirm and explain much of what has been happening over the last several decades in our cities. In fact, it emerges that the fundamental cause of depressed areas in the cities comes from *excess* housing in the low-income category rather than the commonly presumed housing shortage. The legal and tax structures have combined to give incentives for keeping old buildings in place. As industrial buildings age, the employment opportunities decline. As residential buildings age, they are used by lower-income groups who are forced to use them at a higher population density. Therefore, jobs decline and population rises while buildings age. Housing, at the higher population densities, accommodates more low-income urban population than can find jobs. A social trap is created where excess low-cost housing beckons low-income people inward because of the available housing. They continue coming to the city until their numbers so far exceed the available income opportunities that the standard of living declines far enough to stop further inflow. Income to the area is then too low to maintain all of the housing. Excess housing falls into disrepair and is abandoned. One can simultaneously have extreme crowding in those buildings that are occupied, while other buildings become excess and are abandoned because the economy of the area cannot support all of the residential structures. But the excess residential buildings threaten the area in two ways—they occupy the land so that it cannot be used for job-creating buildings, and they stand ready to accept a rise in population if the area should start to improve economically.

Any change which would otherwise raise the standard of living only takes off the economic pressure momentarily and causes the population to rise enough that the standard of living again falls to the barely tolerable level. A self-regulating system is thereby at work which drives the condition of the depressed area down far enough to stop the increase in people.

At any time, a near-equilibrium exists affecting population mobility between the different areas of the country. To the extent that there is disequilibrium, it means that some area is slightly more attractive than others and population begins to move in the direction of the more attractive area. This movement continues until the rising population drives the more attractive area down in attractiveness until the area is again in equilibrium with its surroundings. Other things being equal, an increase in population of a city crowds housing, overloads job opportunities, causes congestion, increases pollution, encourages crime, and reduces almost every component of the quality of life.

This powerful dynamic force to re-establish an equilibrium in total attractiveness means that any social program must take into account the eventual shifts that will occur in the many components of *attractiveness.* As used here, attractiveness is the composite effect of all factors that cause population movement toward or away from an area. Most areas in a country have nearly equal attractiveness most of the time, with only sufficient disequilibrium in attractiveness to account for the shifts in population. But areas can have the same composite attractiveness with different mixes in the components of attractiveness. In one area component A could be high and B low, while the reverse could be true in another area that nevertheless had the same total composite attractiveness. If a program makes some aspect of an area more attractive than its neighbor's, and thereby makes total attractiveness higher momentarily, population of that area rises until other components of attractiveness are driven down far enough to again establish an equilibrium. This means that efforts to improve the condition of our cities will result primarily in increasing the population of the cities and causing the population of the country to concentrate in the cities. The overall condition of urban life, for any particular economic class of population, cannot be appreciably better or worse than that of the remainder of the country to and from which people may come. Programs aimed at improving the city can succeed only if they result in eventually raising the average quality of life for the country as a whole.

ON RAISING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

But there is substantial doubt that our urban programs have been contributing to the national quality of life. By concentrating total population, and especially low-income population, in urban locations, undermining the strength and cohesiveness of the community, and making government and bureaucracy so big that the individual feels powerless to influence the system within which he is increasingly constrained, the quality of life is being reduced. In fact, if they have any effect, our efforts to improve our urban areas will in the long run tend to delay the concern about rising total population and thereby contribute directly to the eventual overcrowding of the country and the world.

Any proposed program must deal with both the quality of life and the factors affecting population. "Raising the quality of life" means releasing stress and pressures, reducing crowding, reducing pollution, alleviating hunger, and treating ill health. But these pressures are exactly the sources of concern and action aimed at controlling total population to keep it within the bounds of the fixed world within which we live. If the pressures are relaxed, so is the concern about how we impinge on the environment. Population will then rise further until the pressures reappear with an intensity that can no longer be relieved. To try to raise quality of life without intentionally creating compensating pressures to prevent a rise in population density will be self-defeating.

Consider the meaning of these interacting attractiveness components as they affect a depressed ghetto area of a city. First we must be clear on the way population density is, in fact, now being controlled. There is some set of forces determining that the density is not far higher or lower than it is. But there are many possible combinations of forces that an urban area can exert. The particular combination will determine the population mix of the area and the economic health of the city. I suggest that the depressed areas of most American cities are created by a combination of forces in which there is a job shortage and a housing excess. The availability of housing draws the lowest-income group until they so far exceed the opportunities of the area that the low standard of living, the frustration, and the crime rate counterbalance the housing availability. Until the pool of excess housing is reduced, little can be done to improve the economic condition of the city. A low-cost housing program alone moves exactly in the wrong direction. It draws more low-income people. It makes the area differentially more attractive to the poor who need jobs and less attractive to those who create jobs. In the new population equilibrium that develops, some characteristic of the social system must compensate for the additional attractiveness created by the low-cost housing. The counterbalance is a further decline of the economic condition for the area. But as the area becomes more destitute, pressures rise for more low-cost housing. The consequence is a downward spiral that draws in the low-income population, depresses their condition, prevents escape, and reduces hope. All of this is done with the best of intentions.

My paper, "Systems Analysis as a Tool for Urban Planning," from a symposium in October, 1969, at the National Academy of Engineering, suggests a reversal of present practice in order to simultaneously reduce the aging housing in our cities and allocate land to income-earning opportunities. The land shifted to industry permits the "balance of trade" of the area to be corrected by allowing labor to create and export a product to generate an income stream with which to buy the necessities of modern life from the outside. But the concurrent reduction of excess housing is absolutely essential. It supplies the land for new jobs. Equally important, the resulting housing shortage creates the population-stabilizing pressure that allows economic revival to proceed without being inundated by rising population. This can all be done without driving the present low-income residents out of the area. It can create *upward economic mobility* to convert the low-income population to a self-supporting basis.

The first reaction of many people to these ideas is to believe that they will never be accepted by elected officials or by residents of depressed urban areas. But some of our strongest support and encouragement is coming from those very groups who are closest to the problems, who see the symptoms first-hand, who have lived through the failures of the past, and who must live with the present conditions until enduring solutions are found.

Over the last several decades the country has slipped into a set of attitudes about our cities that are leading to actions that have become an integral part of the system that is generating greater troubles. If we were malicious and wanted to create urban slums, trap low-income people in ghetto areas, and increase the number of people on welfare, we could do little better than follow the present policies. The trend toward stressing income and sales taxes and away from the real estate tax encourages old buildings to remain in place and block self-renewal. The concessions in the income tax laws to encourage low-income housing will in the long run actually increase the total low-income population of the country. The highway expenditures and the government loans for suburban housing have made it easier for higher-income groups to abandon urban areas than to revive them. The pressures to expand the areas incorporated by urban government, in an effort to expand the revenue base, have been more than offset by lowered administrative efficiency, more citizen frustration, and the accelerated decline that is triggered in the annexed areas. The belief that more money will solve urban problems has taken attention away from correcting the underlying causes and has instead allowed the problems to grow to the limit of the available money, whatever that amount might be.*

*Our continuing examination of urban behavior has been made possible through a grant to M.I.T. from the Independence Foundation of Philadelphia.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

I turn now to some characteristics of social systems that mislead people. These have been identified in our work with corporate and urban systems and in more recent work that I will describe concerning the worldwide pressures that are now enveloping our planet.

First, social systems are inherently insensitive to most policy changes that people select in an effort to alter the behavior of the system. In fact, a social system tends to draw our attention to the very points at which an attempt to intervene will fail. Our experience, which has been developed from contact with simple systems, leads us to look close to the symptoms of trouble for a cause. When we look, we discover that the social system presents us with an apparent cause that is plausible according to what we have learned from simple systems. But this apparent cause is usually a coincident occurence that, like the trouble symptom itself, is being produced by the feedback-loop dynamics of a larger system. For example, as already discussed, we see human suffering in the cities; we observe that it is accompanied (some think caused) by inadequate housing. We increase the housing and the population rises to compensate for the effort. More people are drawn into and trapped in the depressed social system. As another example, the symptoms of excess population are beginning to overshadow the country. These symptoms appear as urban crowding and social pressure. Rather than face the population problem squarely we try to relieve the immediate pressure by planning industry in rural areas and by discussing new towns. If additional urban area is provided it will temporarily reduce the pressures and defer the need to face the underlying population question. The consequence, as it will be seen 25 years hence, will have been to contribute to increasing the population so much that even today's quality of life will be impossible.

A second characteristic of social systems is that all of them seem to have a few sensitive influence points through which the behavior of the system can be changed. These influence points are not in the locations where most people expect. Furthermore, if one identifies in a model of a social system a sensitive point where influence can be exerted, the chances are still that a person guided by intuition and judgment will alter the system in the wrong direction. For example in the urban system, housing is a sensitive control point but, if one wishes to revive the economy of a city and make it a better place for low-income as well as other people, it appears that the amount of low-income housing must be reduced rather than increased. Another example is the worldwise problem of rising population and the disparity between the standards of living in the developed and the underdeveloped countries, an issue arising in the world system to be discussed in the following paragraphs. But it is beginning to appear that a sensitive control point is the rate of generation of capital investment.

And how should one change the rate of capital accumulation? The common answer has been to increase industrialization, but recent examination suggests that hope lies only in reducing the rate of industrialization. This may actually help raise quality of life and contribute to stabilizing population.

As a third characteristic of social systems, there is usually a fundamental conflict between the short-term and long-term consequences of a policy change. A policy which produces improvement in the short run, within five to ten years, is usually one which degrades the system in the long run, beyond ten years. Likewise, those policies and programs which produce long-run improvement may initially depress the behavior of the system. This is especially treacherous. The short run is more visible and more compelling. It speaks loudly for immediate attention. But a series of actions all aimed at short-run improvement can eventually burden a system with long-run depressants so severe that even heroic short-run measures no longer suffice. Many of the problems which we face today are the eventual result of short-run measures taken as long as two or three decades ago.

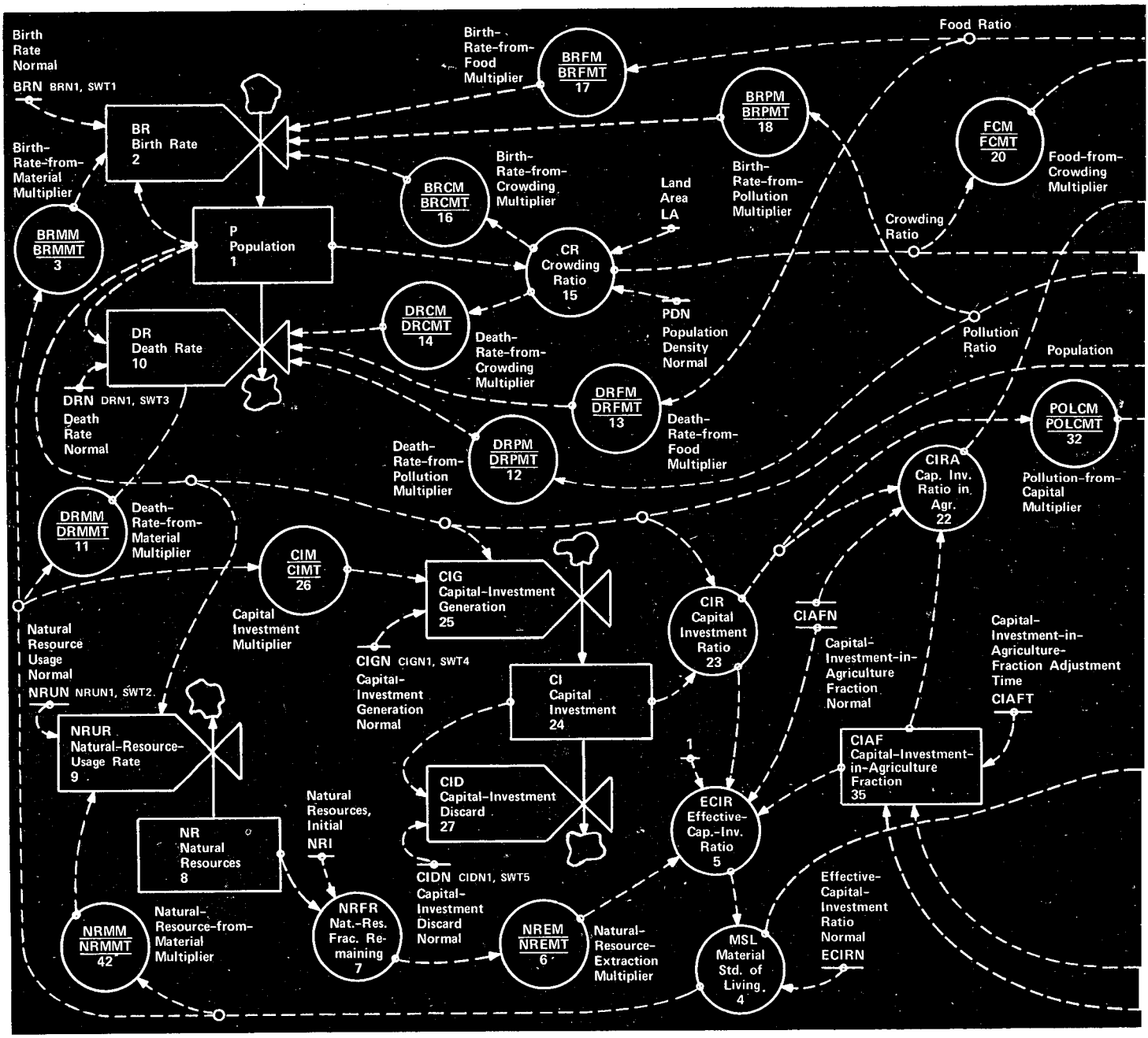
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

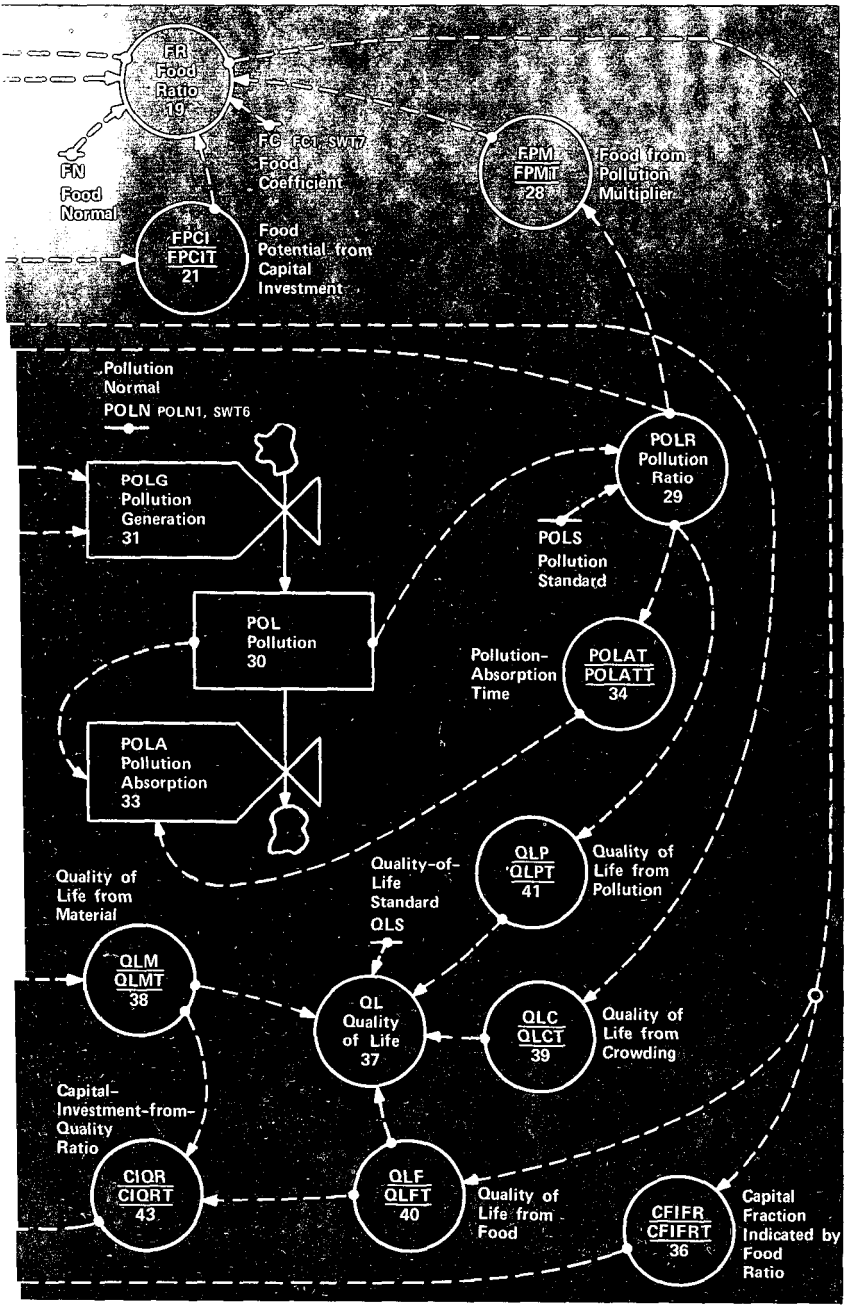
I have mentioned social organizations at the corporate level and then touched on work which has been done on the dynamics of the city. Now we are beginning to examine issues of even broader scope.

In July, 1970, we held a two-week international conference on world dynamics. It was a meeting organized for the Club of Rome, a private group of about 50 individuals drawn from many countries who have joined together to attempt a better understanding of social systems at the world level. Their interest lies in the same problems of population, resources, industrialization, pollution, and world-wide disparities of standard of living on which many groups now focus. But the Club of Rome is devoted to taking actions that will lead to a better understanding of world trends and to influencing world leaders and governments. The July meeting at M.I.T. included the general theory and behavior of complex systems and talks on the behavior of specific social systems ranging from corporations through commodity markets to biological systems, drug addiction in the community, and growth and decline of a city. Expecially prepared for this conference was a dynamic model of the interactions between world population, industrialization, depletion of natural resources, agriculture, and pollution. A detailed discussion of this world system will soon appear in my book *World Dynamics*, and its further development is the purpose of the "Project on the Predicament of Mankind" being sponsored by the Club of Rome at M.I.T. for a year under the guidance of Professor Dennis Meadows. The plan is to develop a research group of men from many countries who will eventually base their continuing efforts in a neutral country such as Switzerland. The immediate project will reexamine, verify, alter, and extend the preliminary dynamic study of the world system and will relate it to the present world-wide concern about trends in civilization.

The simple model of world interactions as thus far developed shows several different alternative futures depending on whether population growth is eventually suppressed by shortage of natural resources,

Figure 1. *Upon this world model are based the author's analyses of the effects of changing population and economic growth factors in the next 50 years. It shows the interrelation of population, capital investment, natural resources, pollution, and the fraction of capital devoted to agriculture on which is based the following discussion.*





by pollution, by crowding and consequent social strife, or by insufficient food. Malthus dealt only with the latter, but it is possible for civilization to encounter other controlling pressures before a food shortage occurs.

It is certain that resource shortage, pollution, crowding, food failure, or some other equally powerful force will limit population and industrialization if persuasion and psychological factors do not. Exponential growth cannot continue forever. Our greatest immediate challenge is how we guide the transition from growth to equilibrium. There are many possible mechanisms of growth suppression. That some one or combination will occur is inevitable. Unless we come to understand and to choose, the social system by its internal processes will choose for us. The natural mechanisms for terminating exponential growth appear to be the least desirable. Unless we understand and begin to act soon, we may be overwhelmed by a social and economic system we have created but can't control.

Figure 1* shows the structure that has been assumed. It interrelates the mutual effects of population, capital investment, natural resources, pollution, and the fraction of capital devoted to agriculture. These five system "levels" are shown in the rectangles. Each level is caused to change by the rates of flow in and out, such as the birth rate and death rate that increase and decrease population. As shown by the dotted lines, the five system levels, through intermediate concepts shown at the circles, control the rates of flow. As an example, the death rate at

* All figures are taken from the manuscript for *World Dynamics* by Jay W. Forrester, Wright-Allen Press, 238 Main Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02142

Symbol 10 depends on population P and the "normal" lifetime as stated by death rate normal DRN. But death rate depends also on conditions in other parts of the system. From Circle 12 comes the influence of pollution that here assumes death rate to double if pollution becomes 20 times as severe as in 1970; and, progressively, that death rate would increase by a factor of 10 if pollution became 60 times as much as now. Likewise from Circle 13 the effect of food per capita is to increase death rate as food becomes less available. The detailed definition of the model states how each rate of flow is assumed to depend on the levels of population, natural resources, capital investment, capital devoted to food, and pollution.

Individually the assumptions in the model are plausible, create little disagreement, and reflect common discussions and assertions about the individual responses within the world system. But each is explicit and can be subjected to scrutiny. From one viewpoint, the system of Figure 1 is comprehensive and complex. The system is far more complete and the theory described by the accompanying computer model is much more explicit than the mental models that are now being used as a basis for world and governmental planning. It incorporates dozens of nonlinear relationships. The world system shown here exhibits provocative and even frightening possibilities.

TRANSITION FROM GROWTH TO EQUILIBRIUM

With the model specified, a computer can be used to show how the system, as described for each of its parts, would behave. Given a set of beginning conditions, the computer can calculate and plot the results that unfold through time.

The world today seems to be entering a condition in which pressures are rising simultaneously from every one of the influences that can suppress growth—depleted resources, pollution, crowding, and insufficient food. It is still unclear which will dominate if mankind continues along the present path. Figure 2 shows the mode of behavior of this world system given the assumption that population reaches a peak and then declines because industrialization is suppressed by falling natural resources. The model system starts with estimates of conditions in 1900. Adjustments have been made so that the generated paths pass through the conditions of 1970.

In Figure 2 the quality of life peaks in the 1950's and by 2020 has fallen far enough to halt further rise in population. Declining resources and the consequent fall in capital investment then exert further pressure to gradually reduce world population.

But we may not be fortunate enough to run gradually out of natural resources. Science and technology may very well find ways to use the more plentiful metals and atomic energy so that resource depletion does not intervene. If so, the way then remains open for some other pressure to arise within the system. Figure 3 shows what happens within this system if the resource chartage is foreseen and avoided. Here the only change from Figure 2 is in the usage rate of natural resources after the year 1970. In Figure 3, resources are used after 1970 at a rate 75 per cent less than assumed in Figure 2. In other words, the standard of living is sustained with a lower drain on the expendable and irreplaceable resources. But the picture is even less attractive! By not running out of resources, population and capital investment are allowed to rise until a pollution crisis is created. Pollution then acts directly to reduce birth rate, increase death rate, and to depress food production. Population which, according to this simple model, peaks at the year 2030 has fallen to one-sixth of the peak population within an interval of 20 years—a worldwide catastrophe of a magnitude never before experienced. Should it occur, one can speculate on which sectors of the world population will suffer most. It is quite possible that the more industrialized countries (which are the ones which have caused such a disaster) would be the least able to survive such a disruption to environment and food supply. They might be the ones to take the brunt of the collapse.

Figure 2. *Basic world model behavior showing the mode in which industrialization and population are suppressed by falling natural resources.*

Figure 3. *Pollution crisis precipitated by lower usage rate of natural resources. In 1970 natural resource usage is reduced 75 percent by more effective technology without affecting material standard of living.*

Figure 3 shows how a technological success (reducing our dependence on natural resources) can merely save us from one fate only to fall victim to something worse (a pollution catastrophe). There is now developing throughout the world a strong undercurrent of doubt about technology as the savior of mankind. There is a basis for such doubt. Of course, the source of trouble is not technology as such but is instead the management of the entire technological-human-political-economic-natural complex.

Figure 3 is a dramatic example of the general process discussed earlier wherein a program aimed at one trouble symptom results in creating a new set of troubles in some other part of the system. Here the success of alleviating a natural resource shortage throws the system over into the mode of stopping population caused by industrialization which has been freed from natural resource restraint. This process of a solution creating a new problem has defeated many of our past governmental programs and will continue to do so unless we devote more effort to understanding the dynamic behavior of our social systems.

(To be concluded in our next issue.)

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W4-STD.
P=P, POLR=2, CI=C, QL=Q, NR=N
Population
Capital investment
Natural resources
Quality of life
Pollution
Years
1900.
1940.
1980.
2020.
2060.
2100.

W4-5
NRUN1
PRESENT .25
ORIGINAL 1.
W4-5
P=P, POLR=2, CI=C, QL=Q, NR=N
Quality of life
Natural resources
Capital investment
Population
Pollution
Years
1900.
1940.
1980.
2020.
2060.
2100.

the purge of chicago economists

ALAN REYNOLDS

Open season has been declared on Chicago economics in general and on Milton Friedman in particular. In recent months, attacks on Friedman have appeared in such generally respected periodicals as the Society for Individual Liberty's *INDIVIDUALIST* and the Foundation for Economic Education's *FREEMAN* [1].

SOLVING MONOPOLY BY DEFINITION

The most misleading attack on Dr. Friedman begins in a suspiciously round-about manner: Murray Rothbard attempts to associate Friedman with Henry Simons' unique affection for trust busting and with Irving Fisher's monetary theory.

Professor Friedman, according to Rothbard, "still retains the old Chicagoite theory: that in some way, the absurd, unreal and unfortunate world of 'perfect competition' (a world in which every firm is so minute that nothing it does can affect its demand and the price of its products) is better than the real, existing world of competition, which is dubbed 'imperfect.' " It is, of course, true that Chicago economists, like most economists, often utilize the notion of "given" price (pure or perfect competition) as a useful simplification. This device enables one to make generalizations, such as "an increase in demand generates an increase in supply," without getting bogged down in exceptions and qualifications (a monopolist may not increase supply, in this case, but only raise price).

Friedman is, however, quite explicit that "there is no such thing as 'pure' competition. Every producer has some effect, however tiny, on the price of the product he produces. The important issue for understanding and for policy is whether this effect is significant or can properly be neglected . . . "[2]. Similarly, George Stigler's paper on the history of the idea of perfect competition criticized "the austere nature of the rigorously defined concept" and suggested redefining competition to mean simply "absence of barriers to entry and exit"[3]. Both Stigler and Friedman stress government's role as the cause of monopoly.

Israel Kirzner, a colleague of Ludwig von Mises, claims Chicago economists have "no awareness of the dynamics of market structure," though his supporting argument shifts to questions of relative "emphasis" and "focus"—clearly a matter of opinion [4]. Contrary to Kirzner, the perfect competition model is not irrelevant, but rather complementary, to "the market process set in motion by disequilibrium conditions." This process is the means by which markets *tend* toward frequently changing market-clearing (equilibrium) prices and outputs, in response to varied conditions of demand or supply. Many excellent discussions of the dynamic nature of markets may be found in Alchian and Allen's Chicagoite text, *UNIVERSITY ECONOMICS*. For example, "By selective differential survival, growth, and imitation by competitors, the population

of business firms converges toward the maximum-wealth output and price programs"[5].

Rothbard's remark that Chicagoites label dynamic competition as "imperfect" is difficult to understand in view of Chicago's devastating refutations of "monopolistic competition," "administered prices," and "increasing concentration"[6]. In this, as in the other matters discussed, there is little tangible difference between the Chicago and Misesist ideas of competition. This is not meant to deny that Rothbard's "real, existing world of competition" could stand some improvement, though Chicago economists do not agree with each other about the need for regulation or anti-trust[7]. Most lasting monopolies are supported in some way by government, but "short-run" collusion can be troublesome and there exist some local and raw material monopolies. Rothbard's unique idea (that since he can't "conceptually identify" a monopoly price it must not *exist*) is not shared by Mises. In cases such as I have mentioned, Mises agrees that "monopoly prices can be realized even in the absence of government policies aiming directly or indirectly at their establishment. It is necessary to realize that consumer sovereignty is not perfect . . . "[8].

WHO LIKES INCOME TAXES?

Next, Rothbard tells us that "Chicagoites prefer the income tax, because in their economic theory they follow the disastrous tradition of 'orthodox' Anglo-American economics in sharply separating the 'microeconomic' from the 'macroeconomic' spheres." Again, Friedman is apparently being judged by his very tenuous association with Henry Simons' 1938 classic on *PERSONAL INCOME TAXATION.*

The unsuspecting reader would never guess that Friedman wrote, in 1952, one of the first unorthodox articles refuting "The Alleged 'Proof' of the Superiority of an Income Tax," and pointed out that even a nonprogressive income tax distorts the allocation of resources, services, and goods[9]. *If* Friedman "prefers" the income tax, it is only in the "lesser of evils" sense in which Dr. Rothbard himself seems to prefer it. In *POWER AND MARKET,* Rothbard tells us, "there are few taxes indeed that will not be as bad as the income tax . . . Certainly, sales or excise taxation will not fill the bill"[10].

Rothbard's allegation of a "sharp separation" between explanations of relative and absolute money prices (micro and macroeconomics) is plausible when applied to the forty-year-old writings of Irving Fisher, but it is not true of any Chicago (or Austrian) economists. In fact, it was Don Patinkin's doctoral thesis at Chicago that rigorously exposed this invalid dichotomy in the pricing process[11]. Of course all economists, Rothbard included, treat specific subjects in separate chapters or volumes. Does such isolation of "macro" and "micro" imply that the authors don't realize that "any sort of tax has unfortunate and distortive effects on the entire economic system" or that inflation disrupts income distribution and saving decisions? Certainly not—the charge is chimerical.

DEFLATIONIST AMBIGUITY

Continuing with his nostalgic, indirect technique, Rothbard reminds us that "Irving Fisher wrote a famous article in 1923 . . . which set the model for Chicagoite 'purely monetary' theory of the business cycle. In this simplistic view, the business cycle is supposed to be merely a 'dance,' in other words an essentially random, and causally unconnected, series of ups and downs in the 'price level' . . . . Therefore, since *the free market gives rise to this random 'dance,'* the cure for the business cycle is for the government to take measures to stabilize the price level" (emphasis added).

Observe the subtle shift from a "dance" caused by the quantity of dollars to the implication that Fisher's dance is supposedly caused by "the free market." Rothbard's last sentence *should* read, "since the government gives rise to this random 'dance,' the cure for the business cycle is for the free market to take measures to stabilize the activities of the monetary authority."

Many volumes of elaborate analysis and research show that every serious inflation *or* depression throughout world history can be directly attributed to monetary disturbances[12]. Rothbard simply dismisses this as "simplistic" and "statistical mumbo-jumbo."

From August 1929 to March 1933, one fifth of U.S. banks closed and the supply of money declined by over one third[13]. Friedman, as Rothbard says, therefore "attributes the 1929 depression not to the preceding inflationary boom, but to the failure of the post-Strong Federal Reserve to inflate the money supply enough, before and during the depression . . . . this 'purely monetarist' approach is almost the reverse of the sound—as well as the truly free-market—Austrian view . . . . Thus, Milton Friedman is, purely and simply, a statist-inflationist."

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Certainly, a one-third *decline* in the money supply is not enough "inflation," and Rothbard's only proof of the "preceding boom" (sic) is the fact that "wholesale prices were either constant or actually falling during the 1920's . . . " Friedman shows that "the severity of each of the major contractions—1920-21, 1929-33, and 1937-38—is directly attributable to acts of commission and omission by the Reserve authorities and would not have occurred under earlier monetary and banking arrangements"[14]. Does this sound like a "statist" view of a "dancing" free market?

More significant is Rothbard's charge that Friedman is an "inflationist" for not wanting peoples' bank accounts to be wiped out and for saying that the money supply and prices should not have been forced down. Friedman is, says Rothbard, pursuing the "quixotic goal of a stable price level." Gary North adds this unclear clarification: "a stable price level requires, logically, stable conditions . . . " (but the "level" is simply an *average* of ups and downs!).

These remarks betray an imbalance in Misesist thought. Small increases in the money supply, or even government deficits alone, are incorrectly treated as an automatic cause of disastrous price increases. Falling prices, however, are always spoken of as either a natural outcome of rising productivity or as an inevitable adjustment to the imbalances of a preceding inflation. In other words, the ideal of a stable, general trend of prices (a price level) is implicitly accepted when discussing price *inflation*. But the idea that prices could trend *down*, for no reason except collapse of the banking system, and that this could cause unnecessary suffering is ignored or rejected.

It might be objected that Friedman nonetheless remains an "inflationist" for prescribing a 3% annual increase in the supply of money. Of course, *any* increase in the amount of money is *defined as* inflationary by the Misesists, but they silently shift to the conventional meaning of inflation (rising prices) when discussing its effects. Clearly, no ill effects follow from stable prices, since the quantity of money keeps pace with rising output and population. As Melchior Palyi put it, "Money creation is inflationary when the additional purchasing power has no counterpart in goods and services people want to buy"[15]. Ludwig von Mises tells us there is nothing wrong with a "comparatively slight and harmless inflation"[16]. On Rothbard's definition, we would have to call Palyi and Mises "inflationists."

THE BOOM THEORY IS A BUST

Another Misesist, Gary North, has recently published an article which complements Rothbard's critique. "Citizens will not face the possibility," says North, "that the depression of the 1930's is being repressed through the expansion of the money supply, an expansion which is now threatening to become exponential"[17]. This dubious thesis shows how tenaciously the Misesist clings to his master's dictum that "no kind of experience can ever force us to discard or modify *a priori* theorems"[18]. If the theorems are correctly deduced from "action axioms," which only a heretic would dare question, then the theorems are True, regardless of how their implications contradict the facts.

North's "repressed depression" implies that any period during which there was no appreciable expansion of the money supply would finally bring on the prophecized inevitable deflationary adjustments. Yet, there have been several noninflationary periods during the postwar era, none of which revived the Great Depression. From December of 1958 to December of 1960, for example, there was no increase whatsoever in the supply of money[19]. There has been nothing remotely approaching "exponential" (doubling or tripling) monetary growth in the entire postwar period, when real output more than doubled, while the money stock did not. But Mises taught that more money is inflation, inflation is a "boom," and booms must bust. Therefore, North and Rothbard patiently wait, like vultures, for the inevitable disaster.

The Mises business cycle theory is internally consistent and has a superficial appeal, even though the whole idea of a "business cycle" is an antiquated anticapitalist myth (booms and busts *aren't* cyclical and *aren't* caused by business). The Mises theory does not, however, show why an excess expansion can't be rectified gradually, why price stability should ever cause monetary collapse, or even why small variations in real savings shouldn't create the same over-all havoc that is attributed to small changes in "forced saving"[20]. In short, the Mises-Hayek theory doesn't really show *why* booms must bust. Crucial assertions, like those above, are simply treated as self-evident.

In policy matters, the most significant distinction between Chicago and "Austrian" monetary theorists is that the Chicagoites prefer price stability (partly because people don't adjust easily to wage cuts) and the Austrians apparently favor deflation. This is curious, because most of Rothbard's arguments against inflation are reversible: unexpected variations in prices, whether up or down, cause mistakes, wealth transfers, disappointments and confusion. General deflation is not more necessary to adjust to particular errors of the boom than over-all inflation is necessary to cure specific unemployment problems. What *is essential to rational* calculation is predictable behavior of the monetary base.

The Austrian affection for a nice, "healthy" depression is unwarranted and dangerous.

RULES VERSUS CHAOS

Milton Friedman set out to make genuine (not just hypothetical) improvements on the existing phoney "gold backing" and fully discretionary central bank authority. A true gold standard is rejected as unfeasible, because gold has lost its aura of inviolability and because the historic performance of gold standards has been poor—due to inevitable introduction of uncontrolled fiduciary elements (bank notes, deposits, government notes, etc.). Moreover, many productive resources (about 1½% of national income) must be devoted to mining the money, and these resources could be used to produce something more wearable or edible.[21].

Gary North's rebuttal to the wastes of mining is that it is a bargain, since "free coinage restrains the capabilities of political authorities to redistribute wealth in the direction of the state." But political authorities have no obvious restraint on their far greater capabilities to use taxes for this purpose. Moreover, Friedman's 3% Rule achieves this restraint without mining costs and avoids the risk of wealth distribution from overly-free private coinage.

North assures us that money can be privately supplied: "A local bank could conceivably flood a local region with unbacked fiat currency. But these so-called wildcat banking operations . . . do not last very long." "Would there not be a chaos of competing coins, weights, and fineness of monies? Perhaps, for brief periods of time and in local semi-isolated regions. But the market has been able to produce light bulbs that fit into sockets throughout America . . ."

There is something a little unconvincing in all this. Just *how brief* are these brief periods of chaos and monetary floods? *How many* "local" banks and "local" regions (Los Angeles?) will be involved? How does the economy's ability to produce uniform light bulbs insure us against counterfeiting? Will I have to take all unfamiliar money that I'm offered to a jeweler or appraiser?

When the United States was last on a gold standard, from 1879 to 1913, "80-90% of the money stock consisted of silver, fiduciary currency, and bank deposits not matched by gold reserves"[22]. The period was marked by financial crises in 1884, 1890, 1893, and 1907. If this isn't what North and Rothbard have in mind, they should explain just how they'll prevent it and how we could possibly deflate prices enough to make the switch.

The existing system prohibits the use of gold as domestic money (which Friedman would not) and ties our base money to gold claims of foreign traders. The elastic "backing" of the currency by a small amount of untouchable gold in no way limits the most absurd imaginable increases in the money supply through either fractional-reserve loan creation or monetization of federal debt. The gold "backing" does, however, mean that a large gold drain to foreign claimants would compel an unjustified deflation or devaluation.

Artificially pegging the dollar in terms of gold leads to pegging the dollar in terms of foreign currencies. These arbitrary exchange rates often form a tariff-like barrier to international trade. Actually, the commodities purchasable with a reasonably stable American dollar are a more than adequate basis ("backing") for international, as well as domestic, trade. Gold should be completely free to seek its own trade ratios with currency and with other commodities.

Contrary to Rothbard, the Friedman rule to limit the discretionary power of the Federal Reserve needn't be mere "advice." Karl Brunner once suggested that, if necessary, it could be a constitutional amendment and violation could be a capital crime. Simpler legislation and a lesser sanction (say loss of employment) would probably suffice to keep Reserve authorities in line. It is, in brief, the existing chaotic system and the Misesist alternative which are characterized by "absolute fiat"—and not the Friedman plan. The choice is between rules and discretion—and chaos.

BEST OF PROBABLE WORLDS

We need men like Rothbard to set ideals toward which we can work; but we also need practical reformers, like Friedman, who actually put into effect a partial extension of market forces.

"From the point of view of a genuine libertarian," asserts Rothbard, "the more inefficient the State's operations, the better for freedom." Even aside from the gall of describing what viewpoint I must hold to qualify as a "genuine libertarian," this is a repulsive statement. It clearly involves self-sacrifice in the service of some abstract ideal. In what way will I be made more free by paying higher taxes for less goods and services? Is Rothbard pulling a dialectic and prophecizing that only a catastrophe will shrink the state?

I am not so concerned with my credentials as a libertarian as I am with my responsibilities as a father. For the forseeable future, the more inefficient the State's operations the less my children will be able to eat or wear, to play or learn. I see no objection to probable improvement by gradual steps. We are talking about real institutions and real people, not about all-or-nothing games of "King of The Mountain" and "Captain or I won't play."

ALL OR NOTHING

Examples of the kamikaze no-compromise approach can be found in any of the many recent

objections to Friedman's policy suggestions. These critiques usually contain one or all of three common themes:

First, a proposed improvement is compared with some remote, highly unlikely ideal instead of being compared with the existing situation. The 3% monetary growth rule is judged inferior to a pure gold standard with 100% reserve banking. Negative income taxes, which, as Rothbard admits, "preserve half of the usual income incentive to work," are compared with the total abolition of public welfare rather than with current schemes in which all benefits are lost by working[23]. Improvements in equity and efficiency through adopting a proportional income tax are compared with no taxes at all. Next, we will probably hear that Friedman's efforts to abolish the draft are "statist" because we should abolish armies. When compared with Rothbardian heaven, any reformer becomes a devil.

The second line of attack involves solution by definition. We have already seen that 3% increases in the money supply are defined as inflationary, though larger increases in the gold supply would be perfectly "harmless." We also noted Rothbard's singular see-no-evil approach to monopolistic collusion. In the same vein, Rothbard feels that the notion of "neighborhood effects" is invalid because it is subject to abuse (the unpaid benefit of watching mini-skirts). To reject neighborhood effects, however, is to say that there are *no* benefits or costs that escape market pricing—a patently untenable position and one which is inconsistent with Rothbard's own argument that polluters should be liable for damages[24].

The third form that criticisms of Friedman often take is the attack of some perversion of the original proposal. In this way, George Pearson and Robert Patton were able to object to educational vouchers by predicting that vouchers will be combined with "extremely stringent controls"[25]. Henry Hazlitt used the same technique in objecting that the negative income tax will just be added to existing welfare rather than replacing any of it. Rothbard's pragmatic critique of the negative tax relies, in part, on the prediction that the "poverty level" will be set much higher than Friedman suggested[26]. These *are* important worries—not about the Friedman plans but about *unacceptable variations* on those plans. The original proposals would still constitute substantial improvement over existing arrangements.

CALLING A SPADE A GODDAMN SHOVEL

Rothbard proclaims: "It is hig time to identify Milton Friedm for what he really is; it is high time to call a spade a spade, and a statist a statist." One problem with the "rigorou distinction" is that it deprives a lovely eipthet of significance. if Friedman is a statist, what do we call Galbraith or Marcuse? Friedman is, of course, what he claims to be—a "classical liberal"—an advocate of severely limited government, much like Ayn Rand.

"Mises' leading follower," according to Rothbard, is Friedrich Hayek. Yet Hayek advocates a monetary rule aiming at price stability and rejects the gold standard. Moreover, he uses the "neighborhood effects" argument, advocates educational vouchers, and accepts "a system of public relief which provides a uniform minimum for all instances of proved need"[27]. Surely Hayek, then, is qualified to join Rothbard's growing class of "statist inflationists," thus giving Friedman a famous Austrian for company.

But what would be achieved by such factious "ideological purity"? Allies and potential converts are banished, while real statists are shielded by being lumped together with prominent advocates of limited government.

Fortunately, the purge of Chicago economists from the libertarian movement is as ideologically unnecessary as it is tactically unwise. We have seen that many of the views which Rothbard ascribes to Friedman are not Friedman's. Sometimes the opinion is just inferred, as by untenable associations with some defunct economist, but other charges are quite explicit—and equally untenable. For example, Rothbard clearly says that Friedman (1) dubs real-world competition as imperfect; (2) believes the business cycle is a random dance of the unregulated market; and (3) doesn't want the government to return its stolen gold hoards to the people. Such allegations scream for verification: a page reference, a quotation—even out of context, just anything at all. But no references are forthcoming. Considering the impact of his attack, surely Rothbard's topic merits more precise treatment.

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22. Friedman, Milton *CAPITALISM AND FREEDOM, op. cit.*, pp. 42-43. pp. 42-43.
23. Rothbard, Murray "Guaranteed Annual Income," *op. cit.*, p. 7. See also C. Green, *NEGATIVE INCOME TAXES AND THE POVERTY PROBLEM* (Brookings, 1967) pp. 113-24.
24. Rothbard, Murray "The Great Ecology Issue," reprint from the *INDIVIDUALIST.*
25. Patton, R. *op. cit.*, p. 212; G. Pearson, "The Case Against Education Vouchers," *REASON* (April/May 1971).
26. See note 23.
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Atlas shrugged at me

DENNIS J CHASE

On a recent flight to Boston to research a magazine article on Ayn Rand, I had a daydream: Miss Rand, who is to make her sole public speech of the year at the Ford Hall Forum, is deboarding her bus from New York. I am waiting for her at the bus terminal. With confidence (the dream continues), I belly my way up to her and say, "Miss Rand, I'm the writer from Chicago who was refused an interview with you, and I have some questions to ask." Stunned, Miss Rand smiles at my brashness and says yes, she would love to talk to me, and invites me to share her cab.

My questions are good, a fact Miss Rand recognizes, and we have a warm revealing discussion in which philosophical points are clarified and heretofore unreported tidbits of information are passed on for my exclusive use. Too quickly, we arrive at the hotel. I cannot thank her enough. As I step from the cab, I hear Miss Rand call to me sharply, **"Wait a minute! What about your share of the fare?"**

Of course, a pipe dream is always the delusion of a desperate man. Miss Rand has been my hero since I was 16 years old, when I read (but comprehended little of) *ATLAS SHRUGGED.* Eventually I devoured all of Miss Rand's novels: *THE FOUNTAINHEAD* (a nontechnical introduction to Miss Rand's philosophy of Objectivism); *ANTHEM* (a search for the word "I"); *WE THE LIVING* (her first novel); and three collections of essays—*FOR THE NEW INTELLECTUAL, THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS,* and *CAPITALISM: THE UNKNOWN IDEAL.* I subscribed to *THE OBJECTIVIST,* the journal which she founded, contributes to, and edits; and I even came to an understanding of Objectivism, the tenets of which I can now recite: reality is an objective absolute; reason is man's means of perceiving it and his only means of survival; individual men should live for their own sakes; laissez faire capitalism is the only political-economic system that corresponds to man's nature.

In short, I was hooked. Still am. This trip represented the closest I might ever come to meeting the woman who so influenced my life. I thought of the experience of Nora Ephron, the free lance writer assigned by the *NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW* to analyze the appeal of *THE FOUNTAINHEAD*—then in its 25th year and 2.5 millionth copy. Refused an interview, Miss Ephron based the article on her schoolgirl disillusionment with *FOUNTAINHEAD* and subsequent rejection of Miss Rand's philosophy. In a trivial conclusion that has become standard for such pieces ("Objectivists occasionally smoke cigarettes with dollar signs on them" and "Miss Rand is said to wear a gold dollar-sign brooch" are examples), Miss Ephron writes:

> One would have liked to ask Miss Rand about that brooch, but she does not give interviews to non-sympathizers. One would have liked to ask a number of other questions: how she feels about *THE FOUNTAINHEAD's* continuing success, how she reacts when she thinks of the people in publishing who said it would never sell, what she does when she opens her royalty checks. Presumably, Ayn Rand laughs.

I tried a different tack—a number of them actually—and hoped that one would succeed. Miss Rand's only mailing address is 201 East 34th Street, headquarters of *THE OBJECTIVIST.* In a two-page letter to Miss Rand, I requested a personal interview, listed my qualifications, indicated my familiarity with Objectivism, and posited three lines of questioning I wished to pursue.

"Is your analysis of male/female roles at variance with some Objectivist principles," I wrote, "particularly your reference to 'woman *qua* woman' and your statement that 'the essence of femininity is hero-worship' in 'An Answer to Readers (About a Woman President),' from the December 1968 issue of *THE OBJECTIVIST?*"

(In an interview published in the March 1964 issue of *PLAYBOY* magazine, Miss Rand says: "I believe that women are human beings. What is proper for a man is proper for a woman. The basic principles are the same." In 1968, she wrote that *no rational woman would want to be* President.)

I continued, "I would like you to explain your concluding paragraph in your essay 'Apollo 11' (September 1969, *THE OBJECTIVIST)* which reads (in part):

> If the United States is to commit suicide, let it not be for the sake and support of the worst human elements, the parasites-on-principle, at home and abroad. Let it not be its only epitaph that it died paying its enemies for its own destruction. Let some of its lifeblood go to the support of achievement and the progress of science. The American flag on the moon—or on Mars, or on Jupiter—will, at least, be a worthy monument to what had once been a great country.

How does this jibe with your statement in the essay 'Collectivized Ethics' in *THE VIRTUE OF SELFISHNESS:*

> Science is a value only because it expands, enriches and protects man's life . . . A 'progress' extended into infinity, which brings no benefit to anyone, is a monstrous absurdity. And so is the 'conquest of space' by some men, when and if it is accomplished by expropriating the labor of other men who are left without means to acquire a pair of shoes.?"

Finally, "I would also like to question your endorsement of Richard Nixon for President and your seeming support for his administration . . . " On all answers, I promised a fair treatment and no hatchet job.

Miss Rand's answer—or rather her secretary's answer—was cryptic, no-nonsense, and standard:

> Miss Rand has asked me to acknow-

ledge your letter of October 15. Except in very special circumstances, it is Miss Rand's policy not to grant interviews.

There was one chance left. I had also requested an interview with Judge Reuben Lurie, long-time moderator of the Forum and associate justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court. This was not only to accumulate background on Miss Rand but to enlist the judge's aid in arranging a meeting with her. *His* answer was encouraging:

I was greatly interested by your description of your projected article about Miss Ayn Rand. There can be no question about the size of the audiences which, in the past ten years, have come to Ford Hall Forum to hear Miss Rand . . . It is true that people have come to the Forum from very great distances to hear Miss Rand. I am not sure as to what I can tell you but it would give me great pleasure to meet and to talk.

I arrived in Boston on the Saturday before the speech and spent that night rereading articles about Miss Rand and passages from her books. The clippings revealed a general animosity which spreads across the political spectrum. Even the analogies are similar. "Such manifestos as Ayn Rand's, however, reveal not only their neurotic motives but also their intellectual poverty," writes Peter Michelsen in a *NEW REPUBLIC* review of *THE ROMANTIC MANIFESTO,* one of Miss Rand's later books. Michelsen writes that Ayn Rand's heroes show "how precariously close we are to the Uebermensch as an ethical ideal." Moving to the right, there is Whittaker Chambers' classic conservative attack on *ATLAS SHRUGGED* in *NATIONAL REVIEW:*

From almost any page of *ATLAS SHRUGGED* a voice can be heard from painful necessity, commanding: "To the gas chamber—go!"

(One almost forgets that Miss Rand is a native Russian, not German . . .)

What redeemed the evening were the passages from Miss Rand's novels and from John Galt's speech in particular. Galt is the hero of *SHRUGGED,* and the climax of the book is a 57-page speech to the nation in which Galt sums up in one philosophical framework all the particulars on the preceeding pages.

Whoever you are—you who are alone with my words in this moment, with nothing but your honesty to help you understand—the choice is still open to be a human being, but the price is to start from scratch, to stand naked in the face of reality and, reversing a costly historical error, to declare: "I am, therefore I'll think."

(Daydream: Miss Rand had been speaking to me for an hour in the privacy of her hotel room; she has been eloquent and illuminating. My eyes are transfixed on this anomaly—a voice and figure of rationality in the midst of an unthinking horde. There is a pause, and it is my turn to interject. "Miss Rand," I say, "the person who complains about the way the ball bounces is usually the one who dropped it." "Interesting," she says, jotting in her notebook.)

One wonders what Galt would have said about the Ford Hall Forum, in light of his (and Miss Rand's) atheism. Ford Hall—which no longer exists—was originally built in the early 1900s as a place for Christian businessmen and their employees to meet and settle grievances. David Sharp Ford, a Boston businessman who provided the original grant for the hall, wanted to offset the belief that Christianity and capitalism were incompatible (they are, says Miss Rand) and to encourage an acceptance of Jesus' teachings ("torture," says Rand). When the hall remained unused, George Coleman, late mayor of Boston and president of the Baptist Social Union, pleaded for a change: turn the building into a forum for various, provocative speakers, he argued. After a struggle, he won. The Forum is the oldest such institution in the United States, now 64 years old. During its time, it has been a platform for Louis Brandeis, Lincoln Steffens, Sidney Hillman, William DuBois, Martin Luther King, Thurgood Marshall, and Robert Welsh.

All this I learn from Judge Lurie on the following day. The meeting with him goes smoothly. Lurie, I discover, has been moderator of the Forum for 30 years and an officer for 50. He is diminutive, slight, and baldish, and he talks slowly as he plods about his very colonial home in Brookline, a suburb of Boston. While making a point, he picks up books for reference—all of which are stacked neatly along the many shelves on the wall. His breathing is encumbered, and saliva forms at the corners of his mouth while he talks, but he is not doddering. Here is an old man of reason.

Yet, at least when talking about Ayn Rand, he is also a man of caution. None of the reportorial tricks—for example, rephrasing questions—will break down the judge's resistance. After listening to a history of the Forum, I try to lead him around to his impressions of or conversations with Miss Rand. Why does she patronize the Forum? What does she do or talk about before her speeches? What is her husband like? Lurie is guarded. He, too, is intrigued by Miss Rand, and he is also trepidatious. "I've always wanted to ask her what she would have done about thalidomide," he says wistfully. Lurie has been personally invited to visit Miss Rand in New York. And, although he has traveled there since, he does not call on her. He will reveal nothing about Miss Rand except one incident: Months earlier, when Miss Rand had somehow discovered that the Forum's long-time secretary had been hospitalized, she sent a "magnificent" bouquet of flowers to the hospital room. "You can talk all you want against altruism, but there is a warm heart there," Lurie says.

The rest of the conversation is not helpful. The judge is careful and declines to answer many questions, although in the meantime we strike up a friendship. With nothing to lose, I half-joked, "Are you this cautious about all your speakers or is there something about Miss Rand that makes you more cautious?" Lurie is unruffled. No, he says, he is judiciously impartial about all the Forum's speakers. Then, without my asking the judge throws me a lifeline: he promises to introduce me to Miss Rand before her speech, provided I arrive at the lecture hall early enough. "You can ask her your questions there," he says. All is not lost.

By 7 p.m., one hour before the speech, there are three lines at the Forum entrance, each extending about one-half block. There is much confusion and noise. The lines began forming at 3 p.m., and Forum officials have had to tell hundreds to go home because of the sellout crowd. I meet Judge Lurie in the lobby (he is obviously excited by the turnout) and he leads me to the "Green Room." This is a room one floor above and to the right of the stage. It is the waiting and autograph-signing area for all speakers. Here Robert Frost used to sit alone, glaring at anyone who dared disturb his pre-speech concentration. And here Max Lerner, for many years a regular speaker at the Forum, would glance at his manuscript—which consisted of one sentence per page. The room is now empty. "I will bring Miss Rand back here," Lurie says matter-of-factly. "I will introduce you, and the rest is up to her." Wouldn't he prefer that I wait someplace else until he secures Miss Rand's approval for such a tete-a-tete, I ask nervously? No, he says, not necessary. He leaves, and I am alone.

Will it work? My immediate concern is keeping occupied until they arrive. I scribble notes on possible questions, I

look for interesting items in the room, (a wall mirror, two chairs, one table). Several times, I hear voices—all invariably female-sounding with Russian accents. I daydream—Lurie: "Miss Rand, this is Mr. Chase." I, barely audibly: "Uh, hello." Miss Rand: "Vaht?" Finally, after what seems like an interminable wait but must have been only minutes, I hear Lurie's voice, Ayn Rand's voice (I think), then Lurie; they enter the room, and I stand to face her.

Miss Rand is not an imposing figure. Unlike her heroes, she is neither tall nor gaunt. Unlike John Galt, her archetypical hero, the shape of her mouth is not pride, nor is it "pride in being proud." I saw no looks of "serene determination and of certainty," nor any of "ruthless innocence which would not seek forgiveness or grant it." What transpired in the following minutes was quite un-Galtlike.

"Miss Rand," Lurie says, "I want you to meet a young man who has traveled all the way from Chicago to see you." I smile and may have said "hello." Short, bespeckled, unsmiling, Miss Rand looks at me with a perturbed glare. Quickly, she looks to her left (for others?) and moves to the wall mirror. She finally talks, all the while adjusting her hair.

"You are not the one who wrote me earlier?" she asks.

"Yes."

"I thought we answered you," she says sternly, hand still adjusting hair (later, in answer to an unrelated question from the audience, she would say that her hairdresser had failed to keep her hair in place).

An opening. "You did," I say, "but Judge Lurie said you might be willing to answer some questions before your speech." (A thought: maybe I am shifting blame . . .)

"No, no," she says, looking down at her papers, "I've been through this too many times."

Please, I hear my mind shouting, not this close—and then to fail . . .

But what can I do? Picking up my notebook, I mumble, "All right," and start for the door. Lurie motions to guide me out, and then it happens.

Suddenly, Miss Rand is talking to me. "In answer to your questions, **read them in context!**" she orders.

I stare at her. She remembered! "There is no inconsistency," she says. My thoughts are racing. I know what she means, but there are more important questions, and this may be my only chance. I hear myself saying, "What about your statement that the essence of femininity is hero-worship? On what do you base this?" "On the rape scene in *THE FOUNTAINHEAD*," she says quickly. "If you will read the passages in context, you will see." I smile and promise to read the passage, and Miss Rand turns away. The interview (?) is over. Lurie motions to me, then he leads me out. "I'm sorry, but we tried," he says.

And that was it. Actually, I have reason to believe that Lurie tried even harder than that. Miss Rand's speech—called "The Anti-Industrial Revolution"—was a dismissal of ecology and contained all the standard Randisms, e.g., "Anyone over 30, give a silent thank-you to the nearest, grimiest, sootiest smokestack you can find." She came out foresquare for technology and against statism, questioning even the motives of those who disagree ("If concern with poverty and human suffering were the collectivists' motive, they would have become champions of capitalism long ago."). Following the question-and-answer period, Judge Lurie did something that I believe was motivated by sympathy for a disheartened writer, namely me. On stage, he asked Miss Rand if she would mind explaining why she speaks at the Forum every year and nowhere else. Miss Rand said that the Forum is "the only intellectual organization of its kind in the whole country." Privately, I thanked the judge and used the answer in my story. It alleviated the grief, but not by much.

There have since been some consolations. I later learned that Miss Rand's ideas are having an impact, the evidence being a growing student "libertarian" movement in which Miss Rand is designated the "key philosopher." In addition, I *did* write a pretty good article on Miss Rand. I *did* see her and speak to her, and not too many writers can say that (I suspect very few want to). She still remains an island of integrity in an ocean of mush. And, after all, at least her snubbing of me was consistent. I realized this on the flight home. Leafing through a copy of *ATLAS SHRUGGED*, I suddenly remembered the passage that made the whole incident clear. I quickly turned to the key dialogue. Yes, I thought, rereading it, that is it, that is it exactly:

"If you saw Atlas, the giant who holds the world on his shoulders, if you saw that he stood, blood running down his chest, his knees buckling, his arms trembling, but still trying to hold the world aloft with the last of his strength, and the greater his effort the heavier the world bore down upon his shoulders—what would you tell him to do?"

"I . . . don't know. What . . . could he do? What would *you* tell him?"

"To shrug." ●

trends

This column reports significant events, publications, and analytical findings associated with the growing rejection of corporate liberalism and the concurrent rediscovery of laissez-faire principles. By reporting and publicizing such items, the REASON community can help ensure that they do indeed represent trends, not merely isolated instances. Readers are invited to submit material for this column.

THE ESCALATING CASE AGAINST MINIMUM WAGE LAWS

Minimum wage laws provide a striking example of the inadequacy of the "common sense" approach to solving social problems. Are people receiving low wages? Then why not pass a law setting a "decent" minimum, thereby raising people out of poverty? Libertarian economists have long replied that the system is *not* that simple and that a likely consequence of such laws is a contraction of the demand for employees. Thus, although those who stay employed will benefit, others will either be fired or never hired. The big unknown, however, was how significant this effect might be.

The early studies were ominous in their implications. Economist Yale Brozen's findings of an apparent correlation between increases in the minimum wage level and unemployment rates—particularly among nonwhite teenagers—should have given the policymakers pause. But opposition to minimum wages appeared to be politically suicidal in the early 60s (and, besides, weren't Brozen and colleague Milton Friedman just a pair of reactionaries?). It has taken twenty years of steady increase in the ratio of nonwhite to white unemployment (from 1.0 in 1948 to 2.3 in 1968) to awaken the rest of the economic community. Within the past year a host of studies have been completed, demonstrating to the satisfaction of most economists that Brozen's analysis was correct.

Econometric models constructed at Ohio University, the National Bureau of Economic Research, and RAND Corporation consistently demonstrate a strong correlation between youth unemployment and minimum wage level increases. Gene Chapin and Douglas Adie of Ohio University state flatly that "Increases in the federal minimum wage cause unemployment among teenagers. The effects tend to persist for considerable periods of time. And the effects seem to be strengthening as coverage is increased and enforcement of the laws becomes more rigorous." Finis Welch and Marvin Kosters, in a RAND study last year, found that as the minimum wage rises "teenagers are able to obtain fewer jobs, and their jobs are less secure over the business cycle. A disproportionate share of these unfavorable effects accrues to nonwhite teenagers." Even Paul Samuelson of MIT, long a champion of interventionism, has seen the light, asking "What good does it do a black youth to know that an employer must pay him $1.60 per hour if the fact that he must be paid that amount is what keeps him from getting a job?"

The AFL–CIO is now mounting a major lobbying effort in favor of an immediate increase in the federally-required minimum from $1.60 to $2.00 per hour. In view of Milton Friedman's apt description of the minimum wage law as "the most anti-Negro law on our statute books," it will be interesting to see who supports and who opposes the AFL–CIO proposal.

SOURCES:
Brozen, Yale, "The Untruth of the Obvious: The Minimum Wage Law," *THE FREEMAN*, June 1968.
"When Minimum Wage Means No Wage At All," *BUSINESS WEEK*, 15 May 1971.

THE RIGHT TO SECEDE

If government "by the consent of the governed" is to have any moral validity, the right of people to withdraw their consent must always be acknowledged. Recent years have seen several attempts at secession from existing governments—Kantanga, Anguilla, Biafra—crushed by force of arms. A lone Englishman took over an abandoned "Texas tower" off the coast of England several years ago and declared it an independent, sovereign nation; but he was careful to pick a location outside any national three-mile limit.

Now, however, an Australian farmer is making an attempt to secede where others failed, *within* the confines of an existing state. He has declared his 30 square mile farm a separate province, independent of Western Australia. Fed up with the government wheat board's restrictive production quotas, Les Casley has set up the Hutt River Province with himself and his three sons as the government. Wayne Casley, age 20, is in charge of foreign affairs, while 22-year-old Ian Casley is director of postal services. Total population is on the order of 20.

Hutt River Province has formally notified the Australian governor-general, the Western Australian state government, and the federal prime minister of its newly-independent status (and a letter also went out to Queen Elizabeth). Thus, the world will soon have a chance to observe whether Australia's brand of liberty is any less of a sham than that available from governments elsewhere.

SOURCE:
"Australian Aiming for Own State," Reuters News Service, *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, 18 April 1971.

publisher's notes

Followups to Previous Articles

Chicago attorney Bernard H. Siegan, author of "Nonzoning in Houston" (*REASON*, "Trends," March 1971) has proposed elimination of all zoning as the best way to end America's housing shortage. A 13 May Associated Press story quotes Siegan stating that the best hope for improved housing lies "in maximizing production and competition." With zoning, "one group, those who got there first, exercises considerable restraints over the production of housing intended to benefit many other groups." Merely making zoning changes to allow low-cost housing for minorities would result in "tokenism," he predicted, and the erection of "even bigger exclusionary walls toward everyone else."

The Nixon Administration is getting ready to release the first set of proposals aimed at a phased deregulation of surface transportation (see "Deregulating Transportation" in "Trends," June 1971). The basic proposals would allow rail and truck rates to be raised and lowered (within a broad range) without ICC interference, eliminate ICC restrictions on entering the trucking business, abolish antitrust immunity of the rail and truck company "rate bureaus" (which presently engage in legally protected price-fixing), and make it much easier for railroads to abandon unprofitable branch lines.

INFORMATION WANTED

The editors are seeking information from readers on private, profit-making fire departments. Private fire companies reportedly exist in or near Chatanooga, Tenn., Rochester, N.Y., Grant's Pass, Oregon, and near St. Louis, Mo. (The editors are already familiar with the Rural/Metropolitan Fire Protection Company of Scottsdale, Ariz. which serves over 100,000 persons.)

The editors are also seeking a libertarian M.D. familiar with the Kaiser Plan or other successful prepaid group medical plans to do an article on noncoercive solutions to the high cost of health care.

POEMS BY H. J. HOHENSTEIN

Peanut butter and jelly
Heavily piled on a Ritz cracker
Sure does beat vichyssoise.

Forever there will be men
Who will happily manipulate Dow Jones
Or glibly talk of a fifty megaton trade-off.

But never will there be enough
Who will gently lie beside you
And after they are spent
Gently caress you and say "I need you."

Scenes vivid in my mind
A tear hanging precariously
You
Lips full and unrouged
You
A shoulder freckled and telltale
You
Old pain pressing and unreleased
You
Of womanhood quested but unfound
You
And ecstacy questioned then released
You
New visions haltingly approached
You
Doors seen as bolted now unlatched
Me
Stepping through with chains unshackled
I

letters

EDUCATION—COMMENT

The growing literature against "free" public schooling, including your excellent issue (*REASON*, March/April 1971), still seems to neglect that monolithic institution's role in perpetuating poverty.

First, the burden of state and local taxes to finance school falls most heavily on those with modest incomes, including uneducated and childless poor. Families with annual incomes under $2,000 pay 44% of their income in taxes. Those with incomes between $2,000 and $4,000 received 11% of their 1965 incomes from government "welfare," but they paid 27% in taxes.

Second, since poor families can't support an unemployed member for, say, 23 years, the majority of students in public colleges come from families of above-average wealth. A four year college education apparently raises lifetime earnings by about $150,000, which can be capitalized through student loans.

This tremendous windfall to the student, we are often told, should be a free gift from persons who lacked the income or intelligence to enable *them* to attend state colleges!

"Free" education transfers income from the uneducated to the educated, from private college users to public college beneficiaries, from those considerate enough to limit family size to those who don't, and from today's poor and disadvantaged to tomorrow's rich and privileged.

Education is too important and private a matter to be handled by anything so clumsy and unresponsive as the current blend of politicians and smug administrators. Let the state and cities return the stolen tax monies to the students and their families, and let individuals choose which institutions, classes, and teachers will receive their tuition fees.

This would infuse a now static, dreary, and irrelevant business with the imagination and awareness that only the fear of losing customers can bring. Administrative objections about the quality and variety of schooling that would develop, by catering directly to individual preferences, simply betray paternalistic contempt for parents and students.

Alan Reynolds
Sacramento, Calif.

BIG BUSINESS -- COMMENT

Congratulations to R.A. Childs, Jr. for his scholarly and masterly intellectual expose (*REASON*, "Big Business and the Rise of American Statism," February and March 1971) of another of the myths which have been perpetuated by Ayn Rand and Objectivists in general—namely the myth of businessmen being "America's persecuted minority."

With enough articles like this, who knows—Objectivists *may* just come to a dim awareness of the incredible moral contradiction they entertain in espousing as virtuous, the concept of "limited government" and "capitalism."

Richard B. Perkins
St. Thomas, Ontario
Canada

R. A. Childs, Jr's article (*REASON*, "Big Business and the Rise of American Statism," February 1971) explodes the myth of "innocent" businessmen uninvolved in the growth of statism and is well taken. However, Mr. Childs is wrong in attributing what he calls a "conservative" viewpoint to Miss Rand and the Objectivists, as the following quotations show: from "America's Persecuted Minority - Big Business" (one of Childs' source documents), *"Elements of statism were present in her [America's] economy from the start . . . there existed another kind of businessmen, the products of a mixed economy, the men with political pull, who who made fortunes by means of political privileges."* (Rand, Ayn *CAPITALISM: THE UNKNOWN IDEAL*, pp. 48-49); and, more conclusively, *"The tragic irony of that whole issue [government vs. business] is the fact that the anti-trust laws were created . . . by the so-called 'conservatives,' the alleged defenders of free enterprise."* (same, p. 52). Miss Rand a conservative?

Furthermore, in her "Notes on the History of American Free Enterprise," Rand concludes: *"So long as a government holds the power of economic control, it will necessarily create a special 'elite,' an 'aristocracy of pull' . . . ."* (same, p. 108). Mr. Childs does a disservice if he means to cast doubt on the philosophical principles of free enterprise by an expose of personal actions of Carnegie, Morgan, etc.

Lance Mueller
Los Angeles, Calif.

FED UP—COMMENT

I agree with the conclusions that Jim Wilson reached in his article "Fed Up With Rock" (*REASON*, June, 1971) as they apply to most of those who call themselves rock fans and to most groups, which (as is the case in most fields of endeavor, but perhaps more so in rock music) are fourth- and fifth-rate imitators of the relatively few true creators (after all, how many execrable symphonies moulder mercifully forgotten for every Beethoven masterpiece?)

However, Wilson fell into most of the pitfalls that ensnare most "outside" criticism of rock music. In the first place, he divided all music into two categories: "serious music" and the rest presumably lumped as "rock." How could he fail to see the difference between Tom Jones (who sings popular music), Brasil 66 (bossa nova), and Swingle Singers (who defy categorization but are, I suppose, more Muzak than anything else), and the bona fide (if inferior) rock groups mentioned? If he is unfamiliar with non-"serious" music, should he write on the subject?

He further displayed his ignorance in the failure to mention any of the musicians generally regarded as seminal to the field. For example, Bill Haley and the Comets and Little Richard, who virtually invented the genre in the early fifties. Above all, how could he have omitted the group that is without doubt the greatest group of all—the Beatles (by the way, to see the use, of classical techniques in rock, try the horn work in "Penny Lane" or the strings in "Eleanor Rigby")? Whether any of their work will survive as long as Beethoven's or Mozart's remains to be seen; however, any critique of the field of rock music that fails to take them into account can only be described as superficial.

Erwin S. Strauss
Santa Barbara, Calif.

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A constitution represents a legal code—*as the extention of a man's moral code of values into a social context.* Since man can be moral, a government proper to the nature of man—*a moral government*—can be created as an extention of his moral code.

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Write: FOUNDATION FOR CONSTITUTIONAL STUDIES. PO Box 4076, Honolulu, Hawaii—96813

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PERSONALS

I would like to correspond on philosophical/scientific issues with objectivists of exceptional intelligence working in the sciences. Ron Merrill, Chemistry Department, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403.

I would like to contact a libertarian attorney in the San Jose/San Francisco Bay area. Will Barkley, Oceanus Company, P.O.Box 9745, San Jose, CA 95117.

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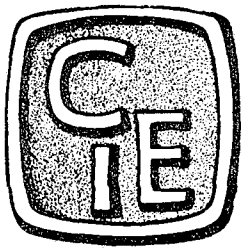

The purpose of the Center for Independent Education is to strengthen independent education. Many persons have misgivings about the values inculcated by the state schools and increasingly find in them only more government controls and chaos in educational standards. Reasons favoring the creation and growth of independent education become more obvious every day. Such reasons are found in our articles.

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